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ABSTRACT

The document presents a Macquarie University research team's evaluation report on the Granville Work Preparation Centre in Australia, which studied the processes required to prepare mildly mentally handicapped adolescents for independent living by teaching them work and social skills. A model is schematized in which research is conceived as having the superordinate role of generating the data base for technical assistance in its various forms. Aspects of the project's research data base reviewed include a longitudinal study of the client population, experimental studies into the personal characteristics and environmental events most conducive to successful habilitation, and research into service delivery and resource management. Five types of functions are examined under the heading "technical assistance": exemplary direct service, program development, dissemination and training activities, direct technical assistance, and participation in planning and resource management. Future plans for the project are also outlined. (DLS)

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THE GRANVILLE PROJECT

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THE GRANVILLE PROJECT

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The establishment about five years ago of two pilot Work Preparation Centres (WPC) for the mildly intellectually handicapped, one at South Yarra, Melbourne, and the other at Granville, Sydney, by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) has provided a unique opportunity for research teams at Macquarie and Monash Universities to study under reasonably controlled conditions the processes required to prepare the intellectually handicapped for independent living. Following is a report of the activities of the Macquarie University team over the last three years.

When asked to contribute to the CRS's evaluation of its pilot work preparation centres the researchers saw that the general aim of the project was to improve the quality of service to mildly intellectually handicapped people and here no essential distinction was made between habilitation and rehabilitation. The project was seen to involve a number of distinct, though related, broad functions, which were classified as "Research" and "Technical Assistance". The following account of the work will be described under these headings which reflect the components of both basic and applied research and the outreach or application of its findings to the problems of programming for the mildly intellectually handicapped. A typical model is schematised below in which it is to be observed that research is conceived of as having the superordinate role of generating the data base for technical assistance in its various forms:

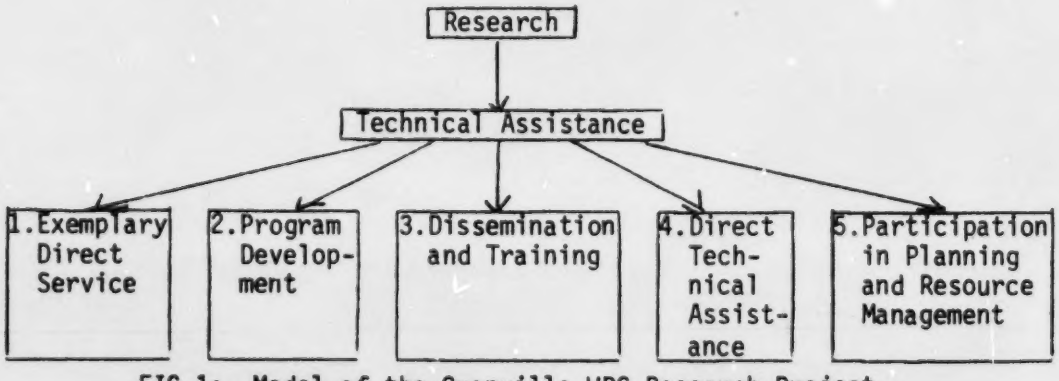

FIG 1: Model of the Granville WPC Research Project

A. *RESEARCH*

The research data base for the Granville project incorporates the following features:

a) Longitudinal study of the client population;
b) Experimental studies into the personal characteristics and environmental events most conducive to successful habilitation;
c) Research into service delivery and resource management.

a) Longitudinal Studies

Experience has shown that for both decision making in social policy and general research purposes there is no real substitute for well conducted longitudinal studies; this is especially the case in Australia where there has been very little research of this type in the area of mental retardation. Longitudinal research stimulates and validates experimental research of all kinds and is particularly appropriate in the area of developmental disability, a definition for which includes the lifetime necessity for community commitment. Work to date has included:

i) A baseline study of the initial graduates of the Granville WPC including a comparison with three other groups of school leavers has been completed.
ii) This study has been followed up with personal interviews with each of these graduates to ascertain more accurately the quality of their vocational and social adjustment. Already these results have had the effect of bringing about adjustments to the WPC program.
iii) A second sample of WPC graduates is being studied as in (i) and (ii) to provide feedback to the WPC and to allow a comparison to be made of the relative success of the later, more refined programs to those carried out in the early stages of development of the WPC. The data collected on this and the earlier group will define a cohort of subjects which may be studied longitudinally.

b) Experimental Studies

The focus of the experimental research has been the search for effective aptitude/treatment interactions; in other words, attempts have been made to optimalise the match between the client and the available programs. This has led to the exploration of the "Subject Variable"

areas of cognition, personality and motivation, particularly as these relate to the learning of industrial skill training and development of interpersonal skills. Preliminary results of one study in particular are most promising and have led to a significant adaptation of the Centre's social development program.

However, despite the need for such research, the dominant theme for the research effort concerns variables that can be manipulated, i.e. the instructional technology of program development and measurement of outcomes.

Here the eventual aim is to produce programs which can be quality tested and made generally available to workers in the field of habilitation of the handicapped. A somewhat varied group of studies has therefore been concerned with:

i) A State-wide survey of the attitudes of school principals toward educational and vocational provisions for the mildly intellectually handicapped has been conducted. The issue of the integration of this population into regular schools was explored, particularly the question of resource needs for the successful implementation of this policy.

ii) A comprehensive survey of employer attitudes towards the mildly intellectually handicapped is being conducted to develop a clearer picture of the concept of "employability". In addition, the survey is planned to provide a clearer picture of those areas of employment which may be most suitable for this population. Once identified, instructional programs to develop skills in these areas can be developed and trialled within the WPC.

iii) A comparison of the effects of two autoinstructional reading programs on acquisition and retention for the mildly intellectually handicapped.

iv) The effects of the modification of conceptual tempo on the acquisition of work skills including the use of task analysis and an investigation of variables which may predict program needs.

v) An investigation of the effects of social competence training and work skill training for the mildly intellectually handicapped.

vi) An investigation of the suitability of existing self concept and social competence tests and ratings for the mildly intellectually handicapped.

vii) An investigation of the variables affecting instructor and trainee performance on a skill acquisition task.

viii) Selected jobs are being task analyzed and instructional packages devised for validation. An example is the development of an instructional package for assembly work using the principle of backward chaining.

ix) The development of an academic screening battery to identify program needs.

c) *Service Delivery and Resource Management*

If such effective diagnostic and intervention programs are available the issue of organisation of service delivery and the models by which those can be best achieved is crucial and thus forms an ongoing part of the research.

B. *TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE*

"Technical Assistance" is a relatively unfamiliar concept outside its American context, but in its generic sense relates to the means by which the community goals for the handicapped may be translated into realistic programs. In the U.S. implementation of the Developmental Disabilities legislation has made considerable use of the "University Affiliated Facility" (UAF) concept to promote positive change. Because, therefore, of the pioneering nature of the Granville WPC and its close relationship with Macquarie University team it may be useful to think of the research enterprise as an example of a UAF. Attention is drawn, therefore, to the following basic characteristics in terms of a suggested model:

This model incorporated five types of function:

1. Exemplary Direct Service. This exemplary function of the Granville WPC attracts a great many visitors, particularly from among the ranks of professional workers engaged in supplying similar or related services.

2. Program Development. Technical assistance has traditionally devoted a substantial proportion of its effort to the development of high quality package programs which, with training and modification, can be used to benefit a specified client population. The relationship between such development work and the parent research data base is obvious, and it has been found in the U.S. that more successful T.A. operations tend to be sited at institutions where they can draw on the talents of a pool of active researchers.

On the basis of research work currently completed, the following program packages are being trialled before being made available to professionals working in allied centres.

i) Academic screening battery
ii) Sound on slide reading program
iii) Social program package
iv) Instructional packages for assembly work
v) Task analysis of selected job skills.

However, the research team has also been conscious of a need for a standard set of diagnostic procedures and it intends therefore to devote its attention to the development of a battery of tests which might better indicate the nature of training a client may require. Other pilot experiments in this category include:

i) Validation of self-concept instruments for use with mildly intellectually handicapped.
ii) Validation of Social and Prevocational Information Battery.
iii) Validation of Centre's existing screening procedures.

3. Dissemination and Training Activities. These activities will necessarily increase as a consequence of the production of programs and instructional strategies, and also as a function of the expansion of services in the general area of work preparation and habilitation. The provision of an exemplary direct service is one aspect of dissemination and it could be argued that through informal visits to

the Granville WPC, a good deal of dissemination and training has already taken place. However, the Centre staff have certainly been involved in formal training exercises such as the pre-service training of personnel from other CRS facilities, private and government agencies.

Another form of dissemination has been the publication of a number of research reports by the Project Team and the Centre staff in journals such as the National Rehabilitation Digest, (a publication of NACH).

4. Direct Technical Assistance. The research team is substantially committed to practical involvement in the WPC as part of its research efforts. It is therefore necessary to dintinguish these specific research functions from the many forms of direct technical assistance which can be applied both within the Granville WPC and other institutions. A good example is the way University staff have been involved in training Centre instructors in various aspects of data-based instruction and this is perhaps the most obvious example of direct technical assistance in the U.S. sense.

5. Participation in Planning and Resource Management. All senior members of the Macquarie team are actively involved in planning under the aegis of various community agencies and scientific bodies. In the present circumstances the most direct contribution would probably be in the area of advising upon the implementation of other WPC's or alternative provisions.

Future Plans:

With funding being assured for a further year a number of new projects, building upon previous work, will be undertaken. Here particular emphasis will be placed upon the development of program packages which may be used in other independent living programs as well as within the WPC. In addition, further basic research will be conducted in the area of the acquisition and maintenance of academic, social and work skills. Here, too, the focus will be upon the generalization of the findings across the other handicapped groups. Naturally, work will continue on

the longitudinal studies which were commenced earlier.

In conclusion, it has been the major aim of the research team to be continually conscious of the accountability aspect of its work so that the quality of service to handicapped people may indeed be improved as a result.

Dec, 1978.